

# THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA OR THE AWAKENED INDIA



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VOL. II.]

MAY 1898.

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## News and Notes.

An appeal from Ceylon. We gladly publish the following and undertake to forward any contribution that may be sent by our subscribers in aid of the Building Fund:—  
DEAR FRIENDS,

I have been in this island a little over six years spending all my energy, time and means to do what little I can to raise the condition of Singhalese women. My efforts I am thankful to say are now beginning to show successful results. The obstacles I have had to contend with and the troubles I have had to undergo while working in an Eastern clime with an Eastern nation are matters of the past, and the way now comparatively free from trials and troubles lies open for further progress.

During this time, through the help of kind friends, I have founded a School and Orphanage and named it by the earnest request of friends after my family:—The Musaeus School and Orphanage.

I have under my protection and care over 50 of Singhalese girls of ages varying from seven to nineteen years, and they live with me under the same roof. I teach them with the help of a few assistants, such subjects as are best suited to make them useful women and helpful members of their society. I am thankful to say that those of our pupils who have left us to begin life in their new homes are grateful to us for what knowledge we have been able to give them, and they perceive themselves the marked contrast that lies between them and their less favored sisters who have not had the advantages of a more progressive education. Dear friends! You who live in the West cannot conceive of the ignorance that prevails amongst Eastern women.

The girls who attend this Institution are Buddhists, and since the Christian Missionaries work with one object alone in view, namely, to convert them to Christianity, they would if not for the education given here sink further into the depths of ignorance. Our aim is to educate them and brighten their lives without interfering with their faith, in fact teaching them according to their own Buddhist ethics.

This work is a most important one and it is by no means a light one and requires much attention and help to ensure its continued success. Who of you dear readers will lend a helping hand to carry out this work? The services of some European or American ladies are urgently needed. Are any of the readers of this appeal free to come out and help in this work? Such help is urgently needed. Is there anyone who is willing to make some sacrifice to help on the work? Who will come?

The school has also grown so large that we shall be obliged to extend our premises, but at present funds are wanting to build. Can any give us help here and make contributions however small they may be towards a building fund?

Trusting that all my readers will pardon this importunity and help me to the best of their ability,

I am yours cordially and fraternally.

MARIE MUSAEUS HIGGINS.

COLOMBO, 7th Feb. 1898.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following pamphlets:—A compendium of Durgapatha in English by Pandit Chintamani Joshi, Almora (the Debating Society Press, Almora) giving the Puranic account of the various forms of Siva Sakti such as Durga and the occasions which necessitated them; a few excellent pamphlets of the Excelsior series edited by Brahmasri Sachchidananda Yogi. R. Siva-Sankara Pandiyaji Avergal F. T. S., Sowcarpet, Madras, on Aryan morals and religion, full of choice extracts from our books and revealing the vast erudition of the editor and specially calculated to improve the moral tone of the rising generation; and a Telugu translation of the English Catachism of Visishtadwaita by the late Sriman Nadadoori Bhasbyacharya being, a clear exposition of that philosophy in easy Telugu (K. Venugopalacharyulu. Printer, Ellore. Price As. 4.)

## SAYINGS

OF

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Prof. Max Muller in his article on 'A Real Mahatman' in the Nineteenth Century says:—

"He (the late Ramakrishna Paramahansa) seems to have been, not only a high-souled man, a real Mahatman, but a man of original thought. Indian literature is full of wise saws and sayings, and by merely quoting them a man may easily gain a reputation for profound wisdom. But it was not so with Ramakrishna. He seems to have deeply meditated on the world from his solitary retreat.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Protab Chunder Mozoomdar, the leader of the Brahma Samaj, and well known to many people in England, tells me of the extraordinary influence which the Mahatman exercised on Keshub Chunder Sen, on himself, and on a large number of highly educated men in Calcutta..... It was a surprise to many of Keshub Chunder's friends and admirers to observe the sudden change of the sober reformer into the mystic and ecstatic saint, that took place towards the end of his life.....

\* \* \* \* \*

"According to Mozoomdar, he (Ramakrishna Paramahansa) accepted all the doctrines, the embodiments, the usages and devotional practices of every religious cult. Each in turn was infallible to him. He was an idolator, and yet most faithful and devoted in his meditations on the perfections of the one formless, infinite Deity whom he termed *Akhanda Sach-chid-ananda*, i.e., the indivisible, real, intelligent, and blissful. His religion, unlike the religion of ordinary Hindu Sâdhus, did not mean much dogma, or controversial proficiency, or outward worship with flowers and sandal, incense and offerings. His religion meant ecstasy, his worship transcendental insight, his whole nature burnt day and night with the permanent fever of a strange faith and feeling. His conversation was a ceaseless breaking forth of his inward fire and lasted for long hours. He was often merged in rapturous ecstasy and outward unconsciousness during the day, particularly when he spoke of his favourite spiritual experiences or heard any striking response to them.

\* \* \* \* \*

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# THE Prabuddha Bhārata OR AWAKENED INDIA.

ब्रह्मविदामोतिपरम्.

“He who knows the Supreme attains the highest.”—*Tait. Upa.* II. 1. 1.

Vol. II.  
No. 11.

MADRAS, MAY 1898.

PUBLISHED  
MONTHLY.

## The Imitation of Vyasa.

**A sharp reply.**—A gentleman in prosperous circumstances and with bright prospects before him, carelessly remarked ‘Vedānta, they say, is a very grand philosophy, but somehow it does not enter into my head’. A friend who sat by, sharply replied, ‘What has now happened to you that you should study Vedānta’. The Vedānta is not meant for those who are intoxicated with the fancied pleasures of life, but for those who have realised their vanity and hollowness.

**The glory of mental worship.**—A certain king had built a magnificent temple in honor of God Vishnu, and fixed a day for opening it in a grand, regal style. He had set apart a fabulous amount of money for the celebration of the *Kumbhābhisheka* ceremony and was arranging to send invitations to all the people of the neighbouring kingdoms and their Rajahs, when God appeared to him in his dream and said, “A poor potter has built for me a temple in his heart and is going to dedicate it to me on the very day which you have fixed for the opening of your temple. Do you, therefore, choose some other day, for I cannot disoblige my great bhakta.” The king woke in the morning and reflecting upon his dream said to himself, ‘The poor potter’s imaginary temple is much more sacred and dear to God than mine, of which I was so foolishly proud. Ah! how much greater is bhakti than wealth.’ So thinking, he went to the potter, and falling at his feet requested to be adopted as his disciple.

**God in everything.**—Sage Kabir Das had a piece of bread and ghee ready for his dinner and was about to sit at the table, when suddenly a dog came running to the spot and taking the bread in its mouth ran away. The Bhakta at once ran after it with the ghee in his hand crying, ‘O Lord, dry bread is not good, is not palatable without ghee. Kindly deign to take this also.’ And he fed the dog with the bread soaked in ghee and himself went away without dinner. To him the very dog was God. Ah! the glory of such love!

**Where is God.**—The enraged Hiranya said to his son Prahlada, ‘Where, O fool, is that God of whom you are so

enamoured and whose meaningless names you incessantly repeat like a mad man?’ The boy sage replied, ‘To me, whatever I see is God, whatever I hear is God, whatever I smell is God, whatever I taste is God, whatever I touch is God, whatever I feel is He and none else, though to your dull eyes He is nowhere.’

**The efficacy of prayer.**—Two men were travelling on the same road. One of them was a sceptic and the other a bhakta. On their way they came across a ruined temple when the bhakta piously went round it three times while the other contemptuously stood aside. As chance would have it, a thorn stuck into the foot of the former in the course of his pious circuit round the temple way, while the latter was rewarded for his impiety with a piece of silver coin which lay just before him on the ground. The bhakta returned limping and joined his companion, who, showing his find, ridiculed him for his thankless piety. The bhakta felt the irony of the thing and exclaimed, ‘There seems to be no God, otherwise such absurdities would not take place, just then a sage appeared on the spot and noticing that one was laughing while the other was almost weeping, inquired and learnt what the matter was and then addressing the sceptic said, ‘Your karma has ordained for you at this moment a rich treasure but on account of your impiety you got only a silver piece.’ Then turning to the bhakta he said, ‘In this bad hour you might have been bitten by the serpent, but because of your pious act you got off so lightly.’ The explanation satisfied both and they went their way, the one confirmed in his bhakti, the other regretting his scepticism.

**Going to Heaven.**—There was in the Tamil land a poetess of the name Anvaiyār, of whom the following story is told. Two of her friends were going to Kailas and invited her also. But she was engaged just then in the worship of Ganesa, and, saying that she could not go with them, did the puja as leisurely as usual. Lord Ganesa was pleased, and, as soon as the puja ended, lifted her in his mighty arm and placed her in Kailas long before her companions reached it. The story need not be taken literally, but it is the meaning that is important.



## The Wilderness of Life.

(An Allegory from the Mahabharata.)

After the great battle of Kurukshetra, in which the blind king Dritarashtra lost all his sons, Vidura approached him and did his utmost to console him. In the course of his discourse, he gave out the following remarkable allegory. A certain Brahman travelling in a wilderness, found himself in the course of his wanderings in a large and inaccessible forest which was filled with beasts of prey. It abounded on every side with lions, tigers and wild elephants and snakes terribly long and ugly. Wherever he turned, he saw nothing but these terrible creatures, all of which began to run towards him the moment they saw him. The poor man was overwhelmed with fear, his hairs stood on end, and he fled hither and thither in fright, but wherever he went, he found that he was disturbing more and more of the denizens of the forest and thus adding to the number of his ugly foes. Seeing that he was encompassed on all sides and hurt by the thorns and wild plants on the ground, which tore his clothes and skin, he ran with desperate haste when he found that the wild forest was girt by a complicated net and that a terrible woman stood at a short distance before him stretching out her arms and eager to devour him like a Râkshasi. Around him were terrible five-headed snakes of dreadful size, which, though unable easily to move, yet shot forth terror and defiance from their eyes.

While running to and fro in this terrible forest, the poor and terrified Brahman suddenly fell into a deep pit, whose mouth was covered with many hard and unwieldy creepers and wild plants. At once he got entangled in those clusters of creepers which were thickly interwoven with one another; and like a large fruit of a jack tree hanging by its stalk, he hung down feet upwards and head downwards. While in this position, he beheld a huge and mighty serpent within the pit, and above, near its mouth a gigantic elephant, dark in complexion and six-faced and twelve-footed, gradually approaching the pit. At the mouth of the pit there was a tree, about the branch of which roved many bees of frightful forms employed in drinking the honey of a comb which they had built. As soon as they saw the man in the pit they swarmed round him and began to sting him. At the same time a black and a white rat, were gnawing away the roots of the shrubs on which he hung. While he was in this distressful situation, there fell down from the comb above, owing to the disturbance of the bees, a few drops of honey fortunately against his mouth. The man tasting them cried 'Ah! how sweet, how sweet, and eagerly longed for more of it. There was fear from the beasts of prey, from that fierce woman in the outskirts of that forest, from the snake at the bottom of the pit, from the elephant near its top, from the certainty of the shrubs giving way owing to the action of the rats, and there was the trouble of the bees flying about his face and stinging him. He knew all this, but, instead of trying to get out of the forest, he only longed for more and more of the honey, and every time a drop fell down from the comb, he exclaimed, 'Ah, how sweet is life!' and continued to remain in that plight without taking any steps to change it.

At this stage Dritarashtra broke out in surprise, 'What, is such foolishness conceivable? Who was that man? Where is the terrible wilderness in which he lost himself? Does he still live, and is there, one to rescue him? Is it possible for me to do any thing for him? I am greatly moved by your description of the poor man's situation. Is there no hope for him?'

Vidura said, 'Those who are conversant with *Moksha Dharma*, the Path of Salvation, cite this as a simile. Understanding this properly, a person may attain to bliss. The Brahmin is not some one different from us and represents ourselves. That which is described as the great wilderness is the world, the deep forest within it is the limited sphere of one's life, the snakes, thorns, tigers, lions and other wild beasts represent the innumerable hardships of transmigratory existence and the diseases to which we are subject. The woman of gigantic proportions residing in the forest is identified by the wise with decrepitude, which destroys complexion, beauty, health and intellect. That which has been spoken of as the pit is the body or the physical frame of embodied creatures. The huge snake at its bottom is Death, the destroyer. The cluster of creepers and plants from which the man hung down, stands for the desires which bind man to the body. The Brahman hanging head downwards implies that man, though by virtue of the potentiality in him is the Lord of Creation, yet through his low desires suffers as a victim. The six-faced elephant proceeding towards the tree and standing at the mouth of the pit, represents the year. Its six faces are the seasons and its twelve feet are the twelve months. The rats black and white that are cutting off the tree, are said to be days and nights which are continually lessening the period of life. The bees denote the incessant worry of life, the vexatious trifles which make us miserable and the drops of honey which now and then fell into the man's mouth, are our little pleasures coming to us in the midst of considerable trouble, but to which we are fatally attached. The wise know life's course to be even such and through that knowledge they succeeded in tearing off its bonds.'

NO-BODY-KNOWS-WHO.

## Goodness is Happiness.

A hunter once caught hold of a sky lark while it was seated on a twig and singing most sweetly :

Like a high born maiden  
In a palace tower  
Soothing her love-laden  
Soul in secret hour  
With the music sweet as love  
Which overflows her bower.

The hunter was about to kill it, when it looked up to the cruel man and begged him to let him go. The hunter was moved by the piteous appeal of the poor bird and at the same time felt that he was doing a very cruel deed in putting to death an innocent bird which was so merry just a minute ago. He looked at the bird intently for a minute and struck with the contrast between himself who was usually sullen and careworn and the ever happy little creature, he said to it 'I will let you go, on one condition however, namely that you tell me truly why you larks are always so happy. I am always melancholy : but I see you singing, singing as if you have nothing else to do all your life.' The lark said, 'Let me go first and then I will tell you, but now I am afraid of you.'

The man let him go and the bird flying up said, "You are melancholy and miserable because you are bad. Wickedness consumes your hearts. But we are happy because we are good and do harm to none."

The hunter no sooner heard the words of the 'pilgrim of the skies' than was struck with their truth and from that day forward gave up all his wicked deeds.

A. RECLUSE.



# The Prabuddha Bharata

OR

## AWAKENED INDIA.

MAY 1898.

### A Great Superstition.

It is a superstition to suppose that superstitions are confined exclusively to the uneducated masses. The educated have their own superstitions which, by the very fact of their being more subtle than those of ordinary men, are more dangerous and detrimental to progress. To fear certain evil because one's left eye throbs, or expect guests in the house because the crow caws in the courtyard, or the fire hisses in the oven, is no doubt superstitious, for obviously the optical nerves, the crow and the kitchen fire have no right to be ranked as prophets, but it is none the less a superstition to think that the Vedānta is nothing but mysticism and robs man of everything natural and interesting by making him a living corpse absolutely dead to the world. Exceedingly strange notions prevail in our own country about the final state of self-realisation, and it is not unusual to see all sorts of strange and fearful stories, based on mere hearsay reports, put into currency by men who come out as teachers and who might be expected to know better. It is no wonder, then, that western writers who take their ideas from eastern exponents, should look upon the end promised by the Vedānta as extremely unnatural, mystic and dreadful. It is freely ventilated in some quarters that the object of the Vedānta is, by means of certain methods of self-torture and auto-mesmerism, to enable man to live on earth as long as he pleases, to see strange visions, to subsist without food, to lie buried underground like a worm or lie on the sea sand or hill side, proof to wind and weather like a piece of rock and as insensible to human emotions and the woes of suffering humanity—a consummation sufficiently unattractive, even to intelligent Eastern minds and positively dreadful to the European mind, accustomed to a practical view of life. M. Renan, when on a visit to Egypt, was shown on the banks of the Nile a human body which, he was told, had been lying there on the scorching sands already for about twenty years, without showing any sign of growth or decay, and belonged to a mystic in trance condition. The great French critic did not even pause to inquire into the truth of the story, but exclaimed with vehemence that the world was not one whit better for the misguided mystic's trances and that, so far as he himself was concerned he did not care whether the body before him had life in it or was a mere carcass about to rot and bleach on the burning shore. We do not say that Renan's attitude was wholly proper or that every other cultured spectator would have taken the same view and passed by with equal indifference, for curiosity at least might have prevailed and induced some inquiry into the matter, nor have we any interest in denying the possibility of such physical states, but what we do say is, that the attempt of the Vedānta is not to turn man into a

stone or a worm, powerless either for good or for evil, a living carcass, not more beneficial than an embalmed mummy, though may be more interesting. And nowhere in the Upanishads, in the Gītā, or the Brahma sutras which together constitute the tripod on which that philosophy rests, is such a carcass state glorified or pointed out as the goal of human aspirations. The question is directly put by Arjuna to his divine cousin in the Gītā what the marks of the man are who is steady in wisdom, how he speaks and how he moves, and the Lord in His reply does not say he will be motionless like a mountain-snake or buried underground like an earth-worm, but that he will be free from desires and move about in the world unaffected and always intent on the Supreme. In that most beautiful of the Upanishads, the Kātaka, young Nāchiketas is told by his divine preceptor, 'When all the desires cease which were cherished in his heart, then the mortal becomes immortal, then he obtains here Brahman. When all the bonds of the heart are broken in this life, then the mortal becomes immortal; this alone is the instruction (of all the Vedas).' In describing the state of freedom, Yama does not tell his pupil that the body becomes stiff like a rock and insensible to wind and weather. In the Brihadāranyakopaniṣad the active king J. ūka and the giant debater Yājñavalkya are the most prominent sages. Again, in the Chhandogya Upanishad there is no mention of immortality to the body either in the elaborate teachings of Sage Uddhālaka to his beloved son Svetaketu, or in the interesting conversation between Nārada and Sanatkumāra. Besides, the episode in the same Upanishad, Indra the king of the gods and Virochana the king of the Asuras, repairing to Prajāpati for instruction, is specially meant to show that wisdom consists in discriminating the *Atman* from the *non-atman*, and not confounding the one with the other as the Asura chief foolishly did. The Mandūkyaopaniṣad distinctly points out the *Atman* as being different from all physical states; and in the words of the Varāhopaniṣad, just as striking at an anthill will not destroy the serpent within, so no amount of bodily torture can kill the mind within. मनएवमनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः Mind is the cause of man's bondage and liberation says the Amritabindupaniṣad, and what is required is not to make the body hard like steel or preserve it by means of herbs and drugs, for wisdom is not proportionate to the number of years one lives on earth, but to purify the mind, to enable it to realise its true infinite nature and thereby rid it of all desires and other passions. The Vedānta will certainly be mysticism, if it seek to make a man live without food, enable him to preserve his life as long as he pleases or get stiff like a corpse, dead entirely to the world though an obscure spark of life may yet linger in the system. The Vedānta will be mysticism, if it seek to enable man to work wonderful feats just as flying in the air, leaving the body at will and wandering in space unobstructed like a ghost or entering into the bodies of others and possessing them like spirits and doing similar things of an unnatural character. The Vedānta will certainly be mysticism, if it seek to make a man read the thoughts of others, or lay him in an eternal trance, where he would be more dead than alive both with reference to himself and others. It does none of these. It is neither black art nor magic, neither Rosicrucianism nor spiritism nor demonology and has an utter disregard for phenomena of all kinds. It says



यदृश्यतन्नश्यं whatever is seen perishes and seeks that which is imperishable, that by whose light everything else is seen, that which is the background of all appearance, that speaking with reference to which, naught else really exists. It says, 'You may fly in the air like a bird but that will not help you. For, whether you are down on earth or up a thousand miles above it, still the vain, impure and traitorous mind, the conjurer of all conjurers, is with you and you are still a poor little creature, vain of your feat of jugglery, a 'tiny-trumpeting gnat' in the boundless empire of space above and below, though so big in your own microscopic vision. You may control your breath and remain motionless for hours, nay years till dust covers you, but do not even stones do the same? you may remain a thousand feet below the ground, and cities, rail roads and temples might have risen upon you; but your fossil-like existence, discoverable only by geological enterprise, does not mean salvation, for, at that rate, the tiny worms and insects which every stratum of earth exhibits on excavation, should be better sages than you. You may live without food, but that is nothing, for dyspepsia does not mean Brahma-Jñāna. What is really required of man is that he should know what the real 'I' means and realise its boundless glory, in which, suns and spheres, constellations and milky ways are like drops which nature's mighty heart drives through thinnest veins. A very feeble echo of such realisation which nevertheless serves to show that such realisation is nothing 'uncanny,' mystic or fanciful, is uttered by the poet when he says

'The All-embracing, All-sustaining One,  
Say, doth He not embrace, sustain, include  
Thee? Me? Himself? Bends not the sky above?  
And earth, on which we are, is it not firm?

\* \* \* \* \*  
And does not All—that is,  
Seen and unseen, mysterious All—  
Around thee and within,  
Untiring agency,  
Press on thy heart and mind?  
Fill thy whole heart with it—and when thou art  
Lost in the consciousness of happiness—  
'Then call it what thou wilt,  
Happiness! heart! Love! God!  
I have no name for it!

A similar experience is described by Tennyson from a slightly different standpoint in the following lines:

"For more than once when I  
Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
The word that is the symbol of myself,  
The mortal limit of the self was loosed,  
And passed into the nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into heaven. I touched my limbs—the limbs  
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,  
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of self  
The gain of such large life as matched with ours  
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,  
'Themselves but shadows of a shadow world."

If these experiences of Goethe and Tennyson which after all are mere unguided, intuitional and chance glimpses of the truth, be mysticisms, then we take no objection to Vedānta also being called by that name. Certainly why should not the Vedānta be mysticism, when love, poetry and happiness are so—happiness of which the great sage of Geneva said "To be happy, to possess eternal life, to be in God, to be saved" all these are the same. All alike mean the solution of the problem, the aim of existence. Happiness has no limit because God

has neither bottom nor bounds and because happiness is nothing but the conquest of God through love." Finiteness, narrowness of vision, littleness of understanding brought about by our constantly taking things to be just what they seem without pausing to inquire how they arise and where they rest, have become so much the habit with us that we raise on uproar and cry halt when the least endeavour is made to overthrow the limits of finiteness and realise the infinite. The Prisoner of Chillon who fell in love with the chains which bound him, is a typical representation of man who so dearly cherishes his littleness and loves his finiteness, which after all is but a habitual fancy. The utmost which our limited vision could bear without getting dizzy, is the poet's flight into the boundless world of space with the joyous sky lark which 'soaring sings and singing soars' or with the west wind which drives away loose clouds like decayed leaves claiming kinship with earth, air and ocean, a noble brotherhood, a spirit all disembodied and immortal though apparently bound in mortal coils. But in the very course of such flight the mind turns inward, where time and space are as zero and its finiteness vanishes for the moment, an experience beautifully recorded as follows:

He looked—

Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth  
And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay  
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,  
And in their silent faces did he read  
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,  
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank  
The spectacle: sensation, soul and form  
All melted into him; they swallowed up  
His animal being; in them did he live,  
And by them did he live; they were his life.  
In such access of mind, in such high hour  
Of visitation from the living God,  
Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.  
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;  
Rapt into still communion that transcends  
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,  
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power  
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

The Vedānta teaches nothing unnatural, forced, false or fanciful. It only tries to make permanent and develop to their fullest capacity the blissful experiences which almost every pure mind has, when the bonds of mortality are suspended for a moment and the soul enjoys its dominion of boundlessness. Such experiences often surprise men when the mind is rapt in spontaneous communion with nature or loses itself in some contemplation of transcendental interest. The Vedānta says that 'the home, sweet home' is there inside, where the apparently finite becomes infinite or rather realises its infiniteness and proves by rigorous logic as beautiful as unassailable, that nature with its thousandfold production and destruction, which drive us with their variety into the delusion of finiteness, is but 'the reflex of our inward force, the phantasy of our dream,' and leads us step by step under the practical guidance of the A chārya without whose divine help no real progress is possible, to the unfailing recognition of our infiniteness. This realisation then, instead of being a sort of mysticism or self-hypnotisation induced by artificial methods, an unnatural end attained by unnatural means, is the highest conceivable poetry, true and natural as attested by the occasional experiences of all, especially of poets who lived in the enjoyment of an ampler ether and a diviner air and instead of being something to be afraid of and avoided as weakening, is a most desirable state,



and is called *samadhi* or *Samyakstithi*, the proper state, the state of equilibrium. What is there more poetic than the realisation of the identity of the soul and Brahman referred to in the following passage of the Kathopanishad :

यएवसुतेषु जागर्तिकामकामपुरुषो निर्ममाणः ।  
तदेवशुक्रं तद्ब्रह्मतदेवामृतमुच्यते ।  
तस्मिँल्लोकाः श्रिताः सर्वेतेदुनात्येतिकश्चन ॥ एतदेतत् ॥  
अभिर्ययेको भुवनं प्रविशेत्पुरुषं पप्रतिरूपो बभूव ।  
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मारूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिष् ॥  
सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षुर्न लिप्यते चाक्षुषेर्बाह्यदोषैः ।  
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मानालिप्यते लोके दुःखेन बाह्यः ॥

That soul which is ever awake even in sleep, sending forth the variety of ideas, is said to be all pure *Brahman*, all immortality ;—all the worlds are held in (as it were, in suspension), there is nothing which transcends it. It is this. As the *one* fire pervading the universe *appears* in so many forms in the variety of objects, so the inner self of all, ever one, appears to take on so many forms, but is ever beyond them. As the sun who enlightens everything has nothing whatever to do with the numerous ill the eye may perceive, so the inner self of all, ever one, has no connection whatever with the joys and sorrows of the world, being ever beyond them.

Realising the glory of the inner soul the sage exclaims 'I am not the body, how could there be death, hunger and thirst for me? I am not the senses, how could there be *Samsara* for me? I am not the vital airs, how could there be motion and rest for me? I am not *Ahamkara*, how could there be grief and joy for me? I am all pure and unconditioned and eternal and blissful *Brahman*.' This grossly misunderstood leads to blind mysticism and leads to unnatural attempts to live without eating, to preserve the body, remain senseless, corpse-like and so on. Rightly understood, it means the body, the senses, the intellect, etc., of the wise man do perform their functions, while he stands unmoved amidst their action like a mere witness, and in the words of *Srimad Bhagavata*, the perfected man inasmuch as he has found his self, reck not whether his body, brought about and carried off by chance, stands or falls even like the drunkard, senseless with intoxication, reck not whether the cloth he wears remains or falls away.

There is one other aspect of the subject under discussion, which is worthy of careful consideration, namely the relation of the wise man to the world, whether his individuality perishes like a bubble and gets erased out of existence on account of self-realisation. And upon this we shall discourse at some length on some future occasion.

### Our Duty.\*

BY THE PRESENT SRI SANKARACHARYA.

(Continued from p. 115.)

WORDS ARE POWERLESS TO DESCRIBE AND MINDS  
CANNOT COMPREHEND THE NATURE OF ATMA.

The Sastras point out what is not, but not what is, *Atma*. This ought not to lead one to infer that soul is

\* The stories contained in this lecture need of course not be taken literally. They contain a grand inner meaning—Ed.

non-existent any more than a blind man's not pointing out a thing should lead to the conclusion that the thing itself does not exist. A wife does not point to her husband in the midst of people. When asked if a certain person is her husband, she says he is not. When asked if yet a second or a third person is her husband, she declares he is not, and so on and so on. But when her husband himself is pointed out, she keeps silence and answers not. Does her silence imply that her husband is not there? That the soul is not directly pointed out by the Sastras does not show that *Atma* does not exist, but only proves the impossibility of the soul being pointed out. Even the guru points out to the disciple only what is not *Atma*, and guides him step by step, and when the disciple gets a glimpse of spiritual light, the teacher remains silent and leaves the disciple to enjoy the vision beatific.

All Sastras (sciences) exist to show that the phenomenal universe is not *Atma*.

ŚRUTI (THE VEDAS) SHOWS THE SAME CONSIDERATION

to all. It points out many ways by which a knowledge of *Atma* might be acquired. Each must take the way which is fittest for him. A man who is strong and stout is directed by a passer-by to a village ten miles off as the next halting place, while one who is weak and feeble is directed by the same individual to a village two miles off. In the same way several *āśramas* are prescribed to you. Each one must choose his *āśramam* according to his own strength of character. It is not necessary that one should be a householder before becoming a *Sanyasi*. One may become a *Sanyasi* as soon as he receives a call for renunciation (*Vairagya*). The *Sanyasi's* duty is chiefly the contemplation of *Atma*. House-holders should also make it a part of their duty to study the soul.

DO NOT PUT OFF THE STUDY OF ATMA.

A man desirous of his spiritual advancement should make his endeavour while his body is in good health, while old age is a distant prospect, while the organs of sense are in good working order and while life is not lost yet. What will you think of a man who begins to dig a well when the house is already on fire with a view to extinguish the flames? One who is eager to know the truth should first study the books (Sastras), and after learning the nature of *Atma* may give up the books, since at an advanced stage books are not necessary. Of course it does not follow that you should give up reading books altogether. They must be studied at the beginning.

IT IS ONLY AN ILLUSION THAT MAKES ONE THINK  
THAT THE BODY IS HIS SOUL.

Man thinks that the body is his own. And a jackal thinks that it is its. The jackal is perhaps more reasonable, seeing that the man loses his ownership of his body as soon as he dies, while the jackal can have full control over the body at least after his death. The body has been compared to the bubble on the surface of the water. The body is even subject to greater dangers than a bubble. Death seizes a man unawares. A man is subject to so many accidents. A man goes to bathe in a river and gets drowned. Our body is even like a frog in a serpent's mouth. Wealth and all our worldly acquisitions are but obstacles in the way of our accomplishing the purpose for which we are born. They bring with them fears and cares as to their safety. I am reminded of a story. A guru and his disciple started on a journey. The guru used to enquire whether there was any *dar* (fear) on the way. The disciple could not understand why the guru made the enquiry. One day the guru gave the disciple a



little bag which he had secreted in his armpit and told him to take good care of it while he went out to attend to himself. Impelled by curiosity, the disciple untied the bag, and on looking into it saw an ingot of gold. The disciple then understood the cause of his guru's anxious enquiries and buried the bag in the earth. The guru returned and both wended their way again. The guru again questioned a passer-by whether there was fear on the road. The disciple thereupon answered *dar picha gya* (fear has been left behind). There is no need for further anxiety.

#### THE BODY IS NOT ATMA.

This is recognized sometimes in practice. We say, 'this is my foot, my head' and so on and not 'I, am the foot, or I am the head.' This shows that there is something which owns these things. When a man dies, you say that the man is gone, while yet the body remains. So the body is not Atma. Atma is not *annamayam*. Is Atma then prana? When a man sleeps soundly he does not respond to any call, even though he is quite alive. We infer thence that Atma is not *pranamayam*. Is Atma then mind? A man is heard to say 'It struck my mind so and so, then I gave it up'. This shows that there is something other than mind which guides the man. So Atma is not *manomayam*. Atma is likewise neither intelligence nor bliss. Bliss is but transitory. Atma is neither *Vignanamayam* nor *Anandamayam*, Atma is not subject to infancy, childhood, manhood or old age. What is Atma then?

#### SUDDHA CHIT ATMA

Unconditioned consciousness is Atma. During profound sleep there is *Suddhaguanam*. *Gnana* is of two kinds, experiential and recollective (*Anubhava* and *Smriti*). The consciousness during sleep is of the *Smriti* kind. After sleep you say that you slept happily and were forgetful of everything. In sleep forgetfulness and happiness are both experienced. This Atma is all-pervading. It shines brilliantly in the three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep. It pervades all objects from Brahma down to an ant. Being unseen, it sees the whole universe. There are three steps to the acquisition of a knowledge of the soul, namely, *Sravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nidhidhyasanam*. *Sravanam* is hearing what the guru has to say. *Mananam* is self-examination and assimilation of what the guru has taught. *Nidhidhyasanam* is the unflagging contemplation of Atma. *Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah*.

#### YOGA

means the controlling of the tendencies of the mind. The term is also applied to the methods by which this state is reached. The various methods are *Mantrayoga*, *Lambikayoga*, *Layayoga*, *Rajayoga* and *Hatayoga*. Mind is ever changing like the tip of a flag streaming over a king's palace. Chitta (mind) is like water. So long as the surface is disturbed, the heavenly bodies will be seen only as broken and unsteady reflections, and not until every ripple is gone will a true image of the soul be reflected in our minds. There are various ways in which concentration of mind is sought to be realised.

#### IDOLS ARE WORSHIPPED

for this end alone. A man may find it difficult at first to fix his attention on the intangible (to him at that stage) Atma. So he is asked first to contemplate an idol and then he is led to the contemplation of himself. Idol-worship is only a stage in the pilgrimage to the temple of Paramatma.

A man stands at a distance. You call him. The man turns a deaf ear to your call and goes his way. But go near and ask him to go to a near place where there is something that might interest him. He goes. Then ask him to go to a second place that is near. He goes again. Thence, stage by stage, you lead him to the final goal. Even so do the Sastras try to lead a man to his goal. One who succeeds in knowing his Atma will regard his body just as he will regard his cloth.

#### WHAT IS MOKSHA?

It is freedom from ignorance; freedom from desires, *Nisprihasya*, *thrinam jagat*. The whole world is a trifle (grass) in the eyes of one who has no desires. He is a slave who has desires. He who has no desires has the whole world at his command.

The four classes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras are enjoined by the Sastras to perform certain *karmas*. These *karmas* should be performed.

#### KARMAS ARE INTENDED FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE MIND.

Ignorance is darkness; and knowledge, light. Your mind is a mirror covered with dust. The dust must be removed by rubbing, before the mirror can reflect objects. The churning operation should be performed before fire can be got by friction from two logs of wood.

Some *karmas* are *nishiddha* and should be abandoned. Some *karmas* are good and must be performed. There are *karmas* which one should perform in order to obtain what he desires, and there are others again which one should refrain from doing in order to be free from miseries. The all-seeing Sastras have foreseen the changes that would prevail in the Kaliyuga and have enjoined that a Brahmin should utter at least ten Gayatris every day. Do not give up your *acharyams*. A wicked man can never get knowledge of the soul. He who has understood the nature of the soul cannot find justification for any wicked act of his by blaming his *prarabdha karma*. One gets *gnana* in virtue of good *karma* in his previous births. If there had been any bad *karmas*, he would not have obtained *Atmagnana*.

#### THE DIFFERENT SECTS

among the Hindus are due to the differences in the development of the individual who attempts to obtain *Mukti*. There are three stages of *Mukti*. *Salokya*, *Sarupya* and *Sayujya*. What cause is there for one sect fighting with another? Let each one work in his own way for his *Mukti*.

#### THE HOLY SANKARA HAS TAKEN GREAT PAINS FOR OURSAKE.

He is said to have conquered even Sarasvati after his victory over Mandala Misra. It simply means that Sankara's philosophy cannot be shaken even by an intellect which is an incarnation of Sarasvati herself. Let us all try to learn his teachings and act up to them. Otherwise we would not only lose our spiritual advancement but render the labour of our Guru useless.

#### ISWARA CANNOT BE CHARGED WITH PARTIALITY.

All the difference you find between man and man in wealth and worldly position, in happiness &c., is due to the irrepressible sway of *karma*. It is by *Karma* alone that *Karma* can be obliterated. It is not necessary to offer flowers to Iswara. Offer flowers of good *karma* to Iswara and you will obtain His favour.



## Who is the real Chandala.

A recluse belonging to the Brahmin caste, who had been for a number of years performing severe austerities on the banks of a sacred stream, had by degrees come to regard himself as a most holy and pious man. His so-called piety consisted in holding himself aloof from the general public, whom he considered as too low to associate with, and whose touch and even near proximity he thought would defile him. He imagined that his daily ablutions in the holy water, his taking a solitary meal cooked by no other hands than his own, his constant recital of sacred verses with closed eyes for several hours, and his living far away from the habitations of other men had transformed him into a pure and virtuous man. He had not a spark of love in the whole of his heart, nor an atom of pity for the frailties and weaknesses of human nature, nor any wish to make the slightest sacrifice in order to help and guide erring mortals. His heart was like a deep abyss, awfully dark and bleak—shut out from the genial warmth of sun, or the purifying influence of air. He resented any familiarity with him and would not allow any one to approach his abode as if his presence carried contagion with it. Although leading a life of penance, he was a man of violent temper, which when once roused, he found it difficult to control.

A washerman, who was a new arrival in the neighbourhood and quite ignorant of the residence of this recluse, came to wash his linen in the very stream near which the hermit was at the time muttering his prayers with closed eyes—hidden by a clump of trees. The Dhobi began to dash some dirty linen against a board so close to the hermit that the sprinkle flew towards the latter and fell on his body. Opening his eyes he discovered that the unwelcome intruder was a Dhobi—a Chandala who had dared to approach his sanctuary and there to defile him with the sprinkle of dirty washings. His rage knew no bounds. He abused and cursed the man and then in a very angry and loud tone ordered him to desist from his dirty work and instantly leave the place. The poor Dhobi who was lustily beating his linen did not hear the hermit, and innocently went on with his work. Finding his commands thus slighted, the hermit lost all self-control, and rising from his seat ran to the washerman and belabored him mercilessly with his fists and legs till he felt quite tired. His victim stood speechless and astonished at this sudden and uncalled for attack. But perceiving that his assailant was a holy Brahmin, he could only mutter a feeble remonstrance and said, "My Lord, what has this slave done to incur your displeasure?" The hermit replied angrily, "Why Sirrah, how darest thou approach my hermitage and defile me by pouring the sprinkle of dirty washings upon my holy person?"

The Dhobi finding that he had been an unwitting intruder upon forbidden ground offered a humble apology and prepared to depart. The hermit now perceived that he had defiled himself by coming in contact with a *chandala* and must cleanse himself. He accordingly went to the stream and bathed himself, thus purifying himself from the momentary defilement. The Dhobi also followed his example. The Recluse did not understand the meaning of this proceeding and asked why he had washed himself. The Dhobi said, "Sir, for the same reason that you washed yourself." The hermit was still more surprised and rejoined, "I washed myself because I touched you—a low born washerman—a *Chandala*—and thus defiled myself. But why did you bathe? Surely the touch of a holy man like me cannot carry any defilement!"

The Dhobi weakly said, "My Lord, one far worse than a *Chandala* just now touched me through you. For the burst of passion which caused you to forget yourself and lay your hands on me was more accursed and unclean than a *Chandala* by birth. I came in contact with him through you and was thus defiled."

The scales fell from the eyes of the hermit on hearing this. He pondered over this answer of the Dhobi which taught him a lesson which his vaunted austerities and penance had hitherto failed to do, viz:—that he who conquers his passion is more mighty than he who subdues a kingdom, and that there is no worse *chandala* than one's own ungoverned temper.

The hermit then compared himself—proud of his piety yet a slave to the sudden and violent gusts of temper—with the Dhobi who remained calm and unmoved even on receipt of the gravest provocation, and found how superior to him the latter was and which of the two had then acted the part of a real *Chandala*.

L. N. J.

## Influence of the Spiritual Thoughts of India in England.

(Miss Margaret Noble, made the following speech on the late Ramakrishna Day:—I am here to-night to sound a note of no doubt, no fear, no weakness, no failure, and no hesitation whatever. I am here to-night to sound a note of infinite joy and victory.)

The name of the Inaugural Meeting of the Ramakrishna mission is wrongly applied to this assembly. That mission held its true inaugural meeting, I think, one day long years ago, in the shadowy gradens up there at Dakshineswar, when the master sent his disciples forth to all the world, as the greatest teachers have always done, to preach the gospel to every creature. (Cheers). And perhaps some of you may consider that the inaugural meeting of the Ramakrishna mission took place on that other day, not long ago, when his friends went to say Godspeed to a wandering Sanyasin, going friendless and ill-provided, to a rich and powerful country in the West. This mission is, to the national life of India, as a great symphony of many movements. One movement is already over, and the first chord of the second is struck. In the passage that is ended, there have been discords, there have been moments of great anxiety and doubt, perhaps even of fear and sadness. But all that is gone, and at this moment, I say with all sincerity, there is no doubt, no fear, and no discord: it is all hope and strength. We know that we will win and shall not fail. (Cheers). (I am not afraid of over-estimating or exaggerating the importance of this movement to Indian national life; it would be easier, I think, to make too little of it than too much. Great are these doings we are living through, and great is the Ramakrishna Mission, and I say that this Mission is bound to be a success after all. (Cheers).)

I am here to tell you something definite about the work done in England about a year and-a-half ago in spreading your spiritual thoughts among us. I am not here to give you the details that newspapers have given you. I am not here to lavish personal praise upon one who is present with us here on this platform. But I am here to try in a few words to tell you something of the significance to us in England of the message you sent to us through him. (Cheers). You in India have deep and subtle and profound views on destiny. You know that no success like that of



Swami Vivekānanda is over-achieved unless there are souls waiting whose destiny it is to hear the message and to use it. These waiting souls in the West number thousands and tens of thousands. Some few have heard, but many have not yet heard the message. I may just try for one moment to say some of the reasons why this message of India to the world is so really needed by us. For the last fifty years, in the West of Europe, we have been religiously and spiritually the most intellectual men and women of the day. For some years, however, it has been the position indeed of overwhelming and complete despair. I do not mean to tell you in India how there comes a moment in the life of any man who has been brought up according to the method of mythology, when that man will find his life a life of complete rupture from all the associations of his childhood, when his intellect is growing and expanding day by day as he progresses towards the higher life of wisdom. That moment comes to every man. In that moment a terrible struggle begins within the soul. Doubt and negation take possession of the soul with all their peculiar consequences. What a terrible moment it is indeed! The reason why such a moment is universally visible in the lives of Western peoples is, of course, in the scientific movement. You all know Darwin's *Origin of Species* came to England only to enforce scientific precision in connection with things known to philosophers centuries and centuries ago. It did more. It made the idea of evolution popular. People had carelessly accepted the inspired sayings of our Bible, 'God is love'; here was nature 'red in tooth and claw', and how can the two things be true? So doubt and agnosticism became common property. At the same time, there was growing over the religious life of England a great wave of longing for that old personal, picturesque, and symbolical worship which was known to our forefathers and to yours. That was a great movement which preceded the agnostic one, and they have borne combined fruit in the fact that man to-day stands longing for catholic reality, yet unable to find his message in dogmas by reason of his passion for, and faculty of judging of, the truth. The scientific movement has done that. It has given us a power of discrimination and tremendous passion for the truth. But in the last ten years or so, a change seems to have been manifested. You all know the names of Professor Huxley and Professor Tyndall as the exponents of agnosticism. Perhaps some of you also remember an essay that appeared in some of the Reviews after the death of Professor Huxley, shewing that his latest conviction was that Humanity was unlike the rest of the animal kingdom in being *dominated* by something higher than mere physical evolution. Long before this, Herbert Spencer had abandoned the position of complete negation and had devoted four chapters of his well-known "First Principles" to the theorem that a first cause existed, and of it we can know nothing intellectually. And so, gentlemen, you see that there has been a turn in the tide. For those who have once left the narrow channels of belief in a personal God who controls the weather, no re-ascent of the river bed is easily possible. They are out in the great ocean of truth, battling with stormy waves; yet as in orthodoxy they begin to suspect that their view is but partial after all and not complete and perfect. It may be that some great personal emotion strikes its note of Love and Sacrifice across their lives by means of words like, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee;" or that great utterance that stayed the giant soul of Martin Luther, "A strong mountain is our God." At

such a juncture the gospel of your great truth, "God is One without a Second," brings infinite enlightenment to the soul of man.

We in Europe have known for a hundred years that India's name is bound up for you with the doctrine of the Real and the Apparent. But to realize all that this means, the voice of the living preacher was needed. "God is One without a Second." If this is so, then misery and sin, evil and fear, are mere illusions. The truth had only to be put clearly and vigorously before us by your great Swami Vivekānanda (cheers) to be grasped at once by some, and sooner or later by many. But the great aim of the Ramakrishna Mission is to preach the true relation of all the religions of the world to each other. (Cheers). And this is a doctrine which no doubt commends itself with peculiar strength to some of those who have come under the influence of your thought. It formulates and harmonizes what we already know of the doctrine of development, and let me, gentlemen, tell you that when a principle finds experience ready, it takes far deeper root than if it had come as a mere theory to be proved. I cannot tell you in detail of the personal energy that has been shown by people, whom I could name, in consequence of their intense realization of the world as the manifestation of God, and of themselves as identical with God; and for whom, therefore, errors, sins, and impossibilities cannot exist.

It is indeed a new light. It is a new light to the mother in dealing with her children. Because, if sin does not exist, if sin is only ignorance, how changed, how different is our position towards wrong and towards weakness and towards fear, instead of the old position of condemnation! The old notion, the old conception of any sort, which has at the bottom hatred, goes away, and instead there is love—all love. But I think there is one thing that we in the West did possess. That was the great passion for service. Twenty years ago, when the doctrine of agnosticism was the burden of all teachings, you find that one reservation was purposely made. There is one thing left for us, and that is "service," and "fellowship." The more the minds of men were driven back from orthodoxy, the more positively and the more intensely they grasped the thought of mutual Brotherhood. Even here your Eastern wisdom brought the light of non-attachment. (Cheers).

(We had yet to realize that the love of self, the love of friends and relations, the love of country are nothing at all, if that love did not simply mean love of the whole world. That if it is a matter of the least consequence to us, whom we serve, then, our service is as nothing. But all society is reflexible society; as our friend Swami Vivekānanda said, there is a great power of progress and expansion in it. In India it would be a great drawback, indeed, to introduce any such theory of national exhaustion, because in India flexibility and easy expansion are impossible. You have the ingenuity of 6,000 years of conservatism. But yours is the conservatism of a people who have through that long period been able to preserve the greatest spiritual treasures for the World, and it is for this that I have come to India to serve here with our burning passion for service.) In coming to serve India, one must know the innumerable difficulties, the needs, the failures, and the defects of India. I need not trouble you any more as our chairman will no doubt address you with greater knowledge and greater wisdom than I am in a position to do. (Before I sit down allow me to utter those three words which are in your own language.—

"Sri Sri Ramakrishna Jayati." (Cheers).]



## Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gita.

(Continued from page 116.)

It seems we may be endlessly discoursing on the Gita. It is one of those books, on every word of which volumes may be written. It is infinite like its author, the more one reads it, the more mysterious and suggestive does it become. Numberless commentaries have been written upon it, but it is more than doubtful if it has become more intelligible on that account. It seems to be like an impenetrable maze, where a number of gates seem to open out, but only really lead into the interior. Every verse in the book seems capable of being interpreted in a number of ways, each contradicting the rest; and it is no wonder that it has become the subject of so much of theorisation in these days when thinkers do little more than theorising. For instance, one says that the book is eclectic in its tendency and attempts, though not with perfect success, to reconcile all the six ancient schools of Indian philosophy. Another says that it is a Sankhya-Yoga reconciler, another that it is a Yoga-Vedanta reconciler, another that it is all Vedanta, another that it is purely Sankhya and has nothing to do with the Vedanta. All these thinkers find authorities for their theories, all in the same Gita, and fight with one another as if the book was meant only for such quarrels, and its value depended entirely upon the result. It is not always that the fight rests between the contending parties, sacred names are dragged into discussion and it is not rare to hear that such and such a commentator is a fool; such and such is a genius and so on. Nor is the author himself spared, one calls Him a dangerous teacher, another that He was an ill-qualified teacher who himself had not known the truth, another that he was confused himself and gave utterance to a half truth here and a half truth there with a lot of contradictions and absurdities.

I have no idea of deciding between these various theories, for, in my opinion, no amount of such theorisation and discussion upon the merits of the commentators and the author, can lead us to the truth. The primary object of the Gita, that for which it was proclaimed to the world is to teach the way to obtain undisturbed peace. It is the daily experience of everyone, that such peace and happiness are far from one who is attached to the world. The only way in which it could be obtained is, as repeatedly declared in the Gita, self-realisation. All other things are only preliminaries to this. Wise men say that there are three great secrets inculcated in the Gita, namely, that one should perform one's duties in life (Swadharma-charana), secondly that one should discriminate between the self and non-self and thirdly that one should realise that everything that exists, gross and subtle, movable and immovable, and the visible and the invisible are nothing but Vasudeva. These secrets are respectively called *guhya* (secret), *guhya-tara* (more secret) and *guhya-tama* (most secret). The first is taught in the second, third, fourth, fifth and eighteenth Chapters. The second, in the second, sixth, thirteenth and the succeeding Chapters. The third, in the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and succeeding Chapters.

These three secrets—so called, not because they are to be jealously guarded from the ears of the common many but because they are sacred—represent the essence of the Vedanta, and indeed of all the Scriptures of the world. They form the cream of religion, and though they have been expressed in a few words, to understand them aright and realise them is a task which is beyond the reach of more than ninety-nine per cent. of the human race. We

are all accustomed to hear that God is omnipresent and very often say it ourselves too. But how few of us understand the idea contained in the word omnipresence and how much fewer still are those who really feel it in everyday life. This omnipresence of God is the last and the greatest of the three secrets referred to above and Sri Krishna expresses it in the words.

सदसच्चाहमर्जुन

both the *sat* and the *asat* am I, O Arjuna. Though we are accustomed to the expression that God is everywhere, few of us pause to think in what way God is omnipresent. There are difficulties connected with this idea of omnipresence. For instance one might ask, 'If God is everywhere, why do I not feel it, or argue? Since he is everywhere, even my wicked thoughts are none but His' and so on. All this is said only to point out that the above mentioned secrets are secrets, though we are accustomed to hear of them every day in our lives. It is a great step in advance to know that they are secrets, for that will lead us to enquire into their real meaning.

This enquiry can begin only with the help of the Acharya who has realised the inner meaning and who is in the position to put those who are anxious to know the truth in the proper path. Unaided effort can avail little in that direction, but when the master is sought and obtained, one will be able to realise those truths for oneself while with the body.

It is on account of these secrets one is required to study the Gita under proper guidance. It is not a mere theoretical book offering hypothetical solutions of the problems of life, but a practical one wherein the reader is asked to realise what is taught and see for himself whether it is true or not. When studied under a teacher, what appeared to be a bundle of tautologies and contradictions unfolds itself to view as a beautiful consistent whole, where idea follows idea in wonderful sequence and a grand philosophy is evolved in all its fulness, and the previously despair-filled, doubting and bewildered mind is feasted with a rich promise of boundless bliss where all things of mortality, finiteness and change will disappear, though the physical may appear to subsist as ever. It has been said that the Gita is a divine commentary upon the Vedas, but it is nearer the truth, as a great sage once remarked, that it is divine compendium of the S'rutis. Every word in it stands for a number of texts and often a single expression epitomises a whole Upanishad. All this beauty can be perceived when only one studies it under a great Acharya who, besides teaching him the text, has initiated him into the mysteries and thereby placed him in an attitude at least to understand what is taught.

(To be continued.)

## Henry David on Manu.

The American Transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, in his remarkable book entitled, "A week on the Concord," writes thus about the *Laws of Manu*:—"One of the most attractive of those ancient books that I have met with is the *Laws of Manu*..... I know of no book which has come down to us with grander pretensions than this, and it is so impersonal and sincere that it is never offensive nor ridiculous. Compare the modes in which modern literature is advertised, with the prospectus of this book, and think what a reading public it addresses, what criticism it expects. It seems to have been uttered from some



eastern summit, with a sober morning prescience in the dawn of time, and you cannot read a sentence without being elevated as upon the tableland of the Ghauts. It has such a rhythm as the winds of the desert, such a tide as the Ganges, and is as superior to criticism as the Himalaya mountains. Its tone is of such unrelaxed fibre that even at this late day, unworn by time, it wears the English and the Sanskrit dress indifferently; and its fixed sentences keep up their distant fires still, like the stars by whose dissipated rays that lower world is illuminated. The whole book by noble gestures and inclinations renders many words unnecessary. English seuse has toiled, but Hindu wisdom never perspired. Though the sentences open as we read them unexpensively, and at first almost unmeaningly, as the petals of a flower, they sometimes startle us with that rare kind of wisdom which could only have been learned from the most trivial experience; but it comes to us as refined as the porcelain earth which subsides to the bottom of the ocean. They are clean and dry as fossil truths, which have been exposed to the elements for thousands of years, so impersonally and scientifically true that they are the ornament of the parlour and the cabinet. Any moral philosophy is exceedingly rare. This of *Manu* addresses our privacy more than most. It is a more private and familiar, and, at the same time, a more public and universal, world than is spoken in parlour or pulpit now-a-days. As our domestic fowls are said to have their original in the wild pheasant of India, so our domestic thoughts have their prototypes in the thoughts of her philosophers. We are dabbling in the very elements of our present conventional and actual life; as if it were the primeval conventicle where how to eat, and to drink, and to sleep, and maintain life with adequate dignity and sincerity, were the questions to be decided. It is later and more intimate with us even than the advice of our nearest friends. And yet it is true for the widest horizon, and read out of doors has relation to the dim mountain line, and is native and aboriginal there. Most books belong to the house and street only, and in the fields their leaves feel very thin. They are bare and obvious, and have no halo or haze about them. Nature lies far and fair behind them all. But this, as it proceeds from, so it addresses, what is deepest and most abiding in man. It belongs to the noontide of the day, the midsummer of the year and after the snows have melted, and the waters evaporated in the spring, still its truth speaks freshly to our experience. It helps the sun to shine, and his rays fall on its page to illustrate it. It spends the mornings and evenings, and makes such an impression on us over night as to awaken us before dawn, and its influence lingers around us like a fragrance late into the day. It conveys a new gloss to the meadows and the depths of the wood, and its spirit, like more subtle ether, sweeps along with the prevailing winds of a country. While we are reading these sentences, this fair modern world seems only a reprint of the *Laws of Manu* with the gloss of Culluca. Tried by a New England eye, or the mere practical wisdom of modern times, they are the oracles of a race already in its dotage, but held up to the sky, which is the only impartial and incorruptible ordeal, they are of a piece with its depth and serenity, and I am assured that they will have a place and significance as long as there is a sky to test them by — *Indian Nation*.

Is Faith not fair of promises  
That echo through th' eternities  
And crown thy doom, O soul,  
With aureole?

## True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastry,

### CHAPTER XV.

"I accept your kiss," said Vasudeva Sastry with a peculiarly tender look in his eyes and gently withdrawing his hand, "as that of a daughter, and I have as much love to you as any father has to his daughter, but at the same time feel extremely sorry that such beauty and such accomplishments should be put to auction every day and placed at the disposal of the highest bidder. Certainly you cannot be a bad girl, for your features indicate a good heart and the music you sang this night in the marriage pandal can certainly not belong to an inherently wicked nature. Such music can never come out except from an excellent heart and such beauty can never mask real wickedness. In spite of your present behaviour, there is a gentle modesty in your face which belies your profession and clearly proves that whatever immorality you have been guilty of, must have been the result of circumstances, and very much against your nature and disposition. Besides, the songs which you just now sang seemed inspired, so, they could not have proceeded wholly from the lips. My daughter, I really wish to know if you sincerely like the profession in which you are engaged. Speak the truth, for, with me, you need have no fear. Poor Jânaki was thunderstruck. She had never heard words like these in all her life, so full of love and sincerity and meant so much for her own good. She felt the delicacy with which the reproof was made and was surprised to find that her real heart had been found out under the mask she wore: her first impulse was to fall at the Sastry's feet and make a clean confession in true filial style, but on further consideration she thought it necessary under the circumstances to proceed with her temptation and this she did with added interest, for she herself became curious to know if the Sastry was really so far above passion as to be unmindful of the unrivalled charms of her person which as far as she knew overpowered and enslaved in an instant all that saw her.

"Alone with me and at this time of the night and seriously advise me to give up my profession!" she said to herself and began her attack more vigorously than before. She pressed his face warmly to hers and smothered him with kisses making his cheeks red and pale by turns with a never failing variety, 'ten kisses long as one and one long as twenty.' Sastry, however, was utterly frosty in desires and sat still like a statue. Jânaki, however, did not despair. She gently entwined herself round him as a jasmine creeper does a margosa tree, played all sorts of petty tricks with him and said a thousand soft nothings. Still the Sastry remained unmoved. Even then Jânaki did not desist. Her wonder at the strange conduct of the Sastry increased and this gave fresh zest to her attack. She rallied, caressed, jested, smiled, frowned, embraced and kissed, but all in vain. One full hour had elapsed in this manner, but not the slightest impression had been made upon Vasudeva Sastry, who sat all the while motionless like a marble figure: and then when all her arts were exhausted and she began to tire, he said, "Do you see, Jânaki, for that is the name by which people were talking of you in the streets, I seriously mean what I say and really look upon you as a daughter of mine. All your conjuring arts were to me like the sports of children and all the while I was only laughing within myself at your powerless tricks. Whose base coin is it that has bought you to play such tricks on me? Women's charms have no more power over the true lovers of God than the sparks of a



furnace have over the cold sea. And in your case, especially, I am filled with pity and really grieve that such beauty and accomplishments should suffer such a fate. I know enough of the world to see that your heart is much greater than your conduct and that your whole appearance is an unwilling lie to yourself."

All this while, Jânaki was standing mute with astonishment, grief and fear, astonishment at the supreme indifference of the man to her temptation, grief at her own poor and despicable lot, and fear that the man before her might be a great Yogi and think of cursing her for her impudence. "Dear Jânaki, daughter," continued Vasudeva Sastry, "can you not abandon this low profession, and marrying some suitable husband, settle in life in a way which would better suit your character and virtues; your broad and elevated forehead indicates a lofty intellect and the space between the two arches of your eyebrows tells of innate spirituality. Your clear countenance is like that of an innocent child, so sweet and blissful. Your lustrous black eyes indicate thought, penetration and quick apprehension. Besides, there is a coolness in your sight, worthy of a sage who holds communion with God. Your voice itself has a rich hymnal ring about it and whatever you sing seems to come from a world much better than ours. Your whole beauty is angelic and instead of exciting lust, creates love, and a strange sympathetic regard for you which borders on veneration. You are certainly meant for much higher things than playing a prostitute's part and unless you are addicted to that profession which I feel certain you are not, I would advise you as a father does a daughter to look up and travel into a walk of life where more of happiness and peace will fall to your lot; where your innumerable accomplishments will shine to better advantage." Jânaki could no longer restrain her feelings and she burst out with pathetic sincerity, "You are my father, since I do not know mine own, nor even my mother, for I was not really born to this wretched profession, but I believe was kidnapped while very young and forced into this life—both father and mother you are to me, none but a real parent would have spoken like this. This night will mark a turning point in my life and from this moment, believe me, I am no more a dancing girl but a daughter of the man who sits before me and to whose goodness and holiness I am indebted more than to any other man in the world or woman. Though in simple plain clothes, you seem to me to be a *Rishi*. I have read in books that Suka passed along a tank where the damsels of Heaven were bathing naked, without even caring to cast a look at them and with a mind all undisturbed, but I thought it was a story. To my great joy and astonishment I see an ordinary looking middle aged man, robust and muscular, who can afford to be indifferent to the charms of one of the fairest of her sex and sitting unmoved like a marble statue in spite of all my kisses and embraces and numberless other temptations." "I request your holiness," she continued, falling at his feet and bathing them with tears, "to forgive my impudence though unpardonable. You had it in your power to withstand my follies. You may, if you will, turn me into a black stone by a single word, but I entreat you, beg you, to be merciful to a poor creature whose birth and parentage are unsolved riddles to herself, who is a poor forlorn creature forced into a wretched life by the intrigues of wicked women. Dear father, I beg you again to forget all the silly things I did to night and treat me in every respect your own daughter, and if there is any that already stands to you in that blessed relation, let me be her sister. Before morning I shall leave this abode of iniquity and follow

you like a spaniel even beyond the seas. You are my teacher, my deliverer, my father, my God, and I look up to you alone for help and guidance. I can see that you are no ordinary man, and by your side I look like a worm that crawls on earth, a glowworm compared with a star. Save me, O Save me, Lord," Jânaki spoke these words with such vehemence, sincerity and eloquence that Vasudeva Sastry was moved to tears. Such was the pathos of the occasion that even the stone walls there, had they only heard her, would have melted away in grief. Our Sastry wiped away his tears and looking at Jânaki whose face bathed in tears was like the moon reflected in a deep flood, said, "Dear girl, you are a thousand times dearer to me now than when I first saw you. I never thought that such a gay hall would contain so repentant a heart."

Just then there rushed out a figure from behind the curtain, crying out, "O, it contains another one equally repentant though not possessing one tenth, one hundredth of the nobility of this angel's heart. Forget and forgive, my lord, one who should have known better and who is filled with shame at his own conduct. I am a wretch, a villain, and a fool and crave your mighty mercy. Save me, O Lord, from this moment, you are my master. So save me."

## A Truly Holy Life.

### I

Rai Shaligram Sahib, Bahadur, the account of whose life appeared sometime ago in the *PIONEER* of Allahabad, is in fact a gentleman of great learning and piety; and his life is regarded, not only by his numerous disciples, but by other sects also, as being the most exemplary and holy. Very few among the educated Indians are ignorant of his worth and ability, which he creditably showed while working as Post Master General of the North-Western Province, and therefore it is not my intention here to give out what is already known to the public, but I will take the spiritual side of his life, trying of course at the same time to briefly but clearly explain the dogmas and fundamental principles of his sublime teachings and their relations with other religious extant generally and with Buddhism specially.

This holy man is regarded a "*wali-madar-zád*," i.e., a born saint, and a critical examination of his career from beginning to end, will prove that the people are not wrong in their estimate.

When he was a boy of 8 years, his parents wanted to get him married, and in accordance with the social customs of his caste, it was binding to have him initiated by a '*guru*' before his hand was united to his betrothed. Accordingly the family *guru* was sent for from Mathura and the saintly boy presented to him. Before undergoing the ceremony, he, to the amazement of the persons present, asked a good many questions on spiritual subjects, which the *guru*, a simple man of ordinary culture did neither understand nor explain, and so he very politely objected to be initiated by him. The parents and the relations, however, were inexorable, and did not like the idea of his being initiated by any one, other than the family *guru*. The boy, then seeing their determination and out of respect for his parents, expressed his willingness to perform the ceremony, but on condition, that in case of a Holy saint being found, (the *guru*) was bound to permit him to go to him for spiritual training and he too was to accompany him



the Holy man. This they agreed upon, and he was initiated.

His school life too was very brilliant and the masters who taught him could not help wondering at the rapid progress he made in his studies, and prophesied that he was destined to rise to eminence and play an important part in the stage of the world. This prophecy was fulfilled when he was appointed Post Master General of the North-West, and subsequently when he took over the charge of more responsible duties as a spiritual instructor.

From his early life he was much given to the study of sacred scriptures, but no one thought that he would become a thoroughly religious man. In the year 1857, while he was working as an Inspector of the Post Office, his mind received a very heavy shock, and he could no more trust himself in this world and give all his time to worldly affairs. He saw thousands of human beings killed in cold blood; the richest reduced to utmost poverty and the poorest raised to a state of affluence, and the idea of the world's transient and impermanent state flashed to his mind. This was too much for him. He saw the folly of man's efforts to acquire happiness, which was only temporary. Nothing is safe from decay and destruction here, and so a sensible man should try to have that happy state which is eternal and everlasting. He longed to flee from this den of misery and to get happiness, unalloyed and permanent, but no one, not even the *yogis* and *sannyasins*, could tell him anything about it. While in this melancholy mood he one day met Lala Pratap Singh, an officer in the Post Master General's Office, and he (the Lala) told him that most probably he would gain his object by going to his (Pratap Singh's) elder brother. For, he said, that his brother was an extraordinary man, who taught people how to attain supreme happiness even in this world, and those that went to him were most satisfied. He, moreover, said that his brother had been teaching since his infancy, his parents being his first disciples. This news gladdened the enquirer's heart, and he at once went to pay his homage to the renowned Saint. His former guru also was with him. Their first meeting was a very long one, and he was convinced that he would gain his object by the help of the Saint, but did not accept him as his *guru* at once. For two years he continually attended his lectures, compared his teachings with those of the Upanishads and other holy writs, and in the end became his disciple. During his stay at Agra, he spent all his time in devotion, in the service of his *guru*, and in his Satsanga. His attachment to the Saint was so intense, that he allowed nobody to serve him. He himself used to grind the flour, cook his meals and feed him with his own hands, and could every morning be seen with the pitcher of water on his head which he used to bring from a place two miles distant for the bathing of his *guru*. No one can cite a better example of a disciple. His monthly salary he used to take to the Saint, and whatever he gave him was sent for the maintenance of his wife and children, and the rest of the amount was spent in charity. He was so much resigned that he did not take any trouble with home affairs; the Saint all along did all for him. His attachment to the Saint was disapproved by his castemen, Kayasthas, a respectable and well-known community in the North-West, and they did not like him to cook the Saint's food and eat from his dishes, as he was a Khetri. But he paid no heed, and his affection to the holy man and his zeal in devotion knew no bounds. There are many stories current at Agra about the fate of such of his castemen as wanted to excommunicate him, but they need not be told here. He was a *chela* in the true sense of the word. After some time he expressed his desire to resign the Government service,

but the Saint would not allow it. When he was appointed Post Master General of the North-West, he fell on his knees and begged for the permission of the Saint to retire and enter with soul and body into spiritual life, but the Holy Man would never permit it. He said the duties and responsibilities of his new office might become obstacles in the way of his spiritual advancement, but the Saint set his mind at ease, saying that it would in no way interfere with his progress, and he (the Saint) would every day see him personally on his tour, and would even be ready to help him by instructions. Accordingly, he left Agra and came to Allahabad, and for many years held the above office; and the Post Office of India is highly indebted to him for many reforms and useful changes he introduced in the Postal Department.

On the death of the Saint, however, in obedience to his last bidding, he retired from the Government service in 1897, and is since imparting spiritual instruction to those who seek his help. People of all nationalities, Hindus, Buddhists, Mahomedans, Christians, Jews and Parsis, and a few Europeans are among his disciples, and the majority of these are found most sincere, and self-sacrificing to the extreme.

Among the Kayasthas and the Khetries of Agra, it is a general belief, that whosoever goes to Rai Saligram, forsakes his family and becomes ascetic, and consequently, they prevent their children from going to him. The people of the former caste even shudder, when any of their relations passes from his street, and they would never look at the lamp burning on the upper story of his house, lest, as they say, they may be influenced to renounce the world and their relations, and they may become useless to the community at large. No doubt, there is some charm in his words, and these superstitious people are not much mistaken in dreading the consequences.

His residence, notwithstanding, is every day visited by a large number of persons, both male and female, who flock there from different parts of the country for religious training. As far as I know, some five meetings are held day and night for this purpose. Most of his time is spent in this way, and he scarcely sleeps more than two hours. He makes no distinction between Brahmin and Sudra, high and low, rich and poor, all are treated equally and kindly. He is so kind-hearted that he even imparts instruction to the sincere people, who cannot visit him owing to sickness or anything else, by correspondence.

He is a man of great powers, though he seldom manifests them. He regards such things as unbecoming and below his dignity. The late lamented Doctor Makund Lal, Assistant Surgeon to the Viceroy, and a famous physician of Agra, more than once, sent persons who had made themselves senseless by Pranayama and to all appearances seemed dead, to Rai Sahab, and he by his sight only brought them to their senses and gave them afterwards to understand that Pranayama is injurious, does very little or no good, and no man can perform it without endangering his life. His own system of yoga, which I will briefly note in my next, is so simple and easy that a child of eight years and an old man of eighty can perform it without difficulty and without any risk. It appears to some that early Buddhists were not ignorant of it, and it may prove interesting to the readers of the "Maha-Bodhi Journal."

Rai Sahab is now about seventy years old.—From the *Journal of the Mahabodhi Society*.